

because of the large flow of illegal immigrants.

So I made a commitment to try to be as reasonable as possible under the existing law, but I have to uphold the law. I made a commitment to try to change the law to treat all people from all Central American countries the same. And finally, let me say, I believe the most important commitment that I made is the commitment on debt relief, to pass our aid package to help the reconstruction effort—which is a genuine emergency—to try to expand trade, to try to develop the economy.

In the end, economic development at home will stem the flood of illegal immigration—genuine opportunities for people—more than anything else we can do. So those were the commitments that I made.

NATO and Kosovo

Q. President Clinton, you've said often that NATO is prepared to act if the Serbs attacked ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Violence is now on the rise. Why isn't NATO responding, and what are you doing to keep the peace talks from collapsing there?

The President. Well, as you know, Senator Dole has just come back from Kosovo, also I think quite frustrated. The real problem, of course is—I don't want this to be misinterpreted—there is no, in my view, moral equivalence between what has been done by the Serbs and what has been done by the Kosovar Albanians to try to secure the autonomy which was unlawfully striped from them a decade ago. But it is clear that in this interim period, when they went home from Rambouillet and they're arguing about whether they should take this peace agreement, there are a lot of tensions and crosscurrents.

The consensus among our NATO allies now is that in the next few days we should be doing everything we possibly can to get these people on both sides to realize that this is—it is crazy for them to go to war, to kill each other, to compromise their children's future, when they have an agreement which, from the point of view of Mr. Milosevic, only requires him to do what the law requires him to do anyway—to respect the autonomy of the Kosovar Albanians—which, from the

point of view of the Kosovars, avoids a bloody war and gives them a chance to establish the mechanisms of self-government without foreclosing or guaranteeing a future of independence, to see how they do in the next 3 years.

It seems to me that a present war is the worst of all circumstances. Now, if the prospect of the agreement were totally destroyed by an outright military offensive, I would be the first to argue that our NATO allies have to take action and take action now. But the situation is, frankly—even though you're absolutely right; there have been some actions by the Serbs—the situation is sufficiently murky and the present status of the peace agreement and whether either side can bring itself to agree is sufficiently shaky, that all the NATO allies at this moment on this day believe that we should devote all of our energies trying to get the agreement.

But I can speak for myself and, I believe, at least for most of my NATO allies, that if this thing come apart at the seams, we still have a commitment. And I'm determined to honor our commitment.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. in the Casa Santo Domingo, Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Arnaldo Aleman of Nicaragua; President Alvaro Arzu and Vice President Luis Alberto Flores of Guatemala; former Senator Bob Dole; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The President also referred to the Joint Central American-United States Declaration (CONCAUSA) and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD-61).

Declaration of Antigua

March 11, 1999

We, the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, the United States of America, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, and the Prime Minister of Belize, meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, on March 11, 1999, welcome the special opportunity afforded by this meeting to secure a prosperous future for our peoples after the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Mitch and Georges.

Hurricane Mitch was the worst disaster in the history of our Hemisphere, killing nearly

10,000 people, affecting at least 6 million others, and causing property damage totaling approximately \$6 billion. Aware of the enormous impact on our countries of this disaster, we are meeting to combine efforts to rebuild and transform the region in such a way as to bring swifter development that will ensure the prosperity of all our citizens.

For the first time in the history of our region, all our countries are enjoying peace, stability, democracy, and freedom. Preserving these achievements requires decisive, forward-looking action in order to avoid jeopardizing the stability of our countries achieved through great sacrifice and to stay on the course of progress.

In a spirit of solidarity, the Central American Presidents gathered for a special, emergency meeting in Comalapa, El Salvador, on November 9, 1998, to appeal to the international community for solidarity and to adopt joint decisions on how best to coordinate our efforts to help one another in the task of rebuilding and transformation.

Despite the tragedy we face, we recognize that the current situation also offers a unique opportunity to reconstruct our economies, transform our societies, and lay the economic foundation for sustained growth to prepare our nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. With our own efforts and with the staunch, sustained support of the international community, we will overcome the challenges ahead.

The Central American nations and the Dominican Republic deeply appreciate the strong show of support, generosity, and solidarity to our peoples, and the valuable cooperation and emergency assistance provided by the international community. We take this opportunity to express particular gratitude for the speedy, timely response of the people and the Government of the United States of America. The President of the United States of America reiterates his commitment to contribute efforts to transform and rebuild Central America and the Dominican Republic.

Reconstruction and Transformation

We welcome the opportunity this Summit offers to intensify the frank dialogue we began in San Jose. We reaffirm the values we share as peoples and nations, based on

democracy, the free market, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the effective rule of law, the campaign against international crime, and our commitment to environmental protection.

Based on these values, the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, the United States of America, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the Vice President of Guatemala, met in Washington, D.C., on December 11, 1998, to agree on mechanisms to rebuild and transform the region, and at that time received encouraging support and solidarity from the people and the Government of the United States of America.

Aware that our efforts should be complemented by long-term support from financial institutions, the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the Vice President of Guatemala, met in Washington, D.C., on December 10–11, 1998, to report to the international community, at the Consultative Group convened by the Inter-American Development Bank, on the magnitude of the damage and to establish mechanisms for effective coordination with donors, thereby ensuring the resources necessary to begin the difficult task of rebuilding and transforming our countries.

We agree that the effective, lasting transformation of the region means enhancing democracy; promoting sustained economic growth as the best antidote for poverty; strengthening the rule of law and national reconciliation; ensuring the full effectiveness of human rights; strengthening judicial systems and good governance; fostering transparency; combating international crime; approaching in a humane manner the issue of migration; expanding trade and investment opportunities; supporting debt relief and financial cooperation; and implementing a program of sustainable development that includes natural disaster prevention.

The Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, and the Prime Minister of Belize, reaffirm our determination to achieve the rapid rebuilding and transformation of our countries with a view to establishing prosperous societies with equal opportunity for all.

We agree to underscore the importance of obtaining, during this initial rebuilding phase, non-reimbursable funds and concessionary lines of credit to finance programs in those areas most essential for economic, agricultural, and industrial recovery and for the reintegration of the people affected into the productive life of our countries. To that end, the Presidents of Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Belize express appreciation for the request for special funds for rebuilding Central America that President Clinton sent to his Congress, and again call upon the international community and international financial institutions to lend their firm support to the efforts to rebuild Central America.

Debt Relief and Financial Cooperation

The Presidents of Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Belize welcome the commitment by the President of the United States of America to provide debt relief to Nicaragua and Honduras, whose economies were especially devastated by Hurricane Mitch. Debt relief is critical to building a sustainable path to development for these countries as they work to rebuild and transform their economies.

The Presidents of Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Belize view with approval the support provided by the United States of America within the Paris Club to extend a moratorium on debt servicing for Honduras and Nicaragua over the next two to three years, which will free up vital resources for reconstruction and transformation efforts. The President of the United States of America reiterated his commitment to play a leadership role in providing comprehensive external debt reduction for Honduras and Nicaragua under the Paris Club and consideration of eligibility under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In addition, the President of the United States has requested authority for a \$25 million contribution to the Central America emergency trust fund in order to help pay debt service to the international financial institutions.

The President of the United States of America expressed his determination to support and contribute to both bilateral and

multilateral initiatives, in order to obtain the maximum additional resources needed on an urgent and concessionary basis at the May 1999 meeting of the Consultative Group in Stockholm, Sweden. That meeting will be a pivotal event in donor coordination and in confirming pledges of resources for the reconstruction and transformation of the region. The Presidents of Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Belize expressed their appreciation for the determination by the United States of America to increase substantially bilateral aid programs for the reconstruction of their countries.

Trade and Investment

We recognize that the formulation of a comprehensive program of reconstruction and economic recovery for the region in the wake of Hurricanes Mitch and Georges would be incomplete without the consideration of trade and investment as essential components for economic development, regional integration, and prosperity. It is through commercial opportunities generated by better and more secure markets that sustainable development, long-term political and economic stability, and, therefore, widespread human development in the region can be achieved. We recognize that creating incentives for increased trade and investment will be advanced by our adherence to commitments agreed upon in multilateral trade negotiations such as in the World Trade Organization.

Two-way trade between the United States of America and its neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean has grown rapidly in this decade and has been highly beneficial for both sides. This reflects the continued success and relevance of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) in promoting greater trade flows and investment and generating employment in the United States of America as well as in the region. Free market economies and private sector participation are essential to rebuilding our countries, consolidating democracy, and promoting closer economic relations. As we approach the new millennium, we are determined to rededicate our commitment to open markets and to

strengthen even more this mutually beneficial relationship.

We are aware of the importance of strengthening relationships that have developed in the areas of textiles and clothing, not only because of the enormous benefits for the United States of America and the nations of the Caribbean Basin, but also as a way of ensuring our mutual competitiveness in the context of the world market as we approach the year 2005.

President Clinton expressed his determination to work actively with the United States Congress to enhance the Caribbean Basin Initiative in a manner that responds effectively to the needs of the countries of the region. These enhancements should help prepare for the creation of a region of shared prosperity among Central America, the Dominican Republic, and the United States of America.

We welcome President Clinton's commitment to send the Bilateral Investment Treaties with El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua to the United States Senate for ratification. These treaties send a positive signal of the region's openness to foreign investment and its determination to protect property rights and to forge a partnership with business to rebuild and transform the economies victimized by Hurricane Mitch.

The leaders praised the excellent beginning to the negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The governments of the United States of America, the Central American countries, and the Dominican Republic affirmed their commitment to work together to achieve concrete progress in the FTAA negotiations, including by implementing a series of business facilitation measures. For this purpose, the governments will consult on cooperative efforts they can undertake to help the countries of the region to advance in this direction. In this regard, we highlight transparency as an important element of the FTAA process. We, therefore, look forward to the ongoing work of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society.

Migration

We recognize that the effects of Hurricanes Mitch and Georges on Central Amer-

ica and the Dominican Republic have caused suffering for their population and have further complicated social and economic conditions for an adequate reintegration of their repatriated citizens. In this regard, the Presidents of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Belize express appreciation for the temporary measures already taken by the Government of the United States of America aimed at mitigating the adverse impact of repatriations to the region, and we reaffirm our commitment to maintaining dialogue at the highest level with a view to finding humane and permanent solutions to the problems of migration.

Taking into account the origins, manifestations, and social, economic, and political effects of migration, and bearing in mind the interdependence of our countries, the Government of the United States of America will consider initiatives to address the disparities created by the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). We recognize that migrants contribute to the development and prosperity of their region of origin and of their new country of residence and also recognize that, in order for these benefits to be realized, migration should be orderly. We will also cooperate to address disorderly emigration and its consequences. We affirm our belief that long-term reconstruction, investment, trade, and assistance should include joint efforts to create sustainable employment opportunities that would provide alternatives to the need for future emigration.

We recognize the difficulties some repatriated citizens face as they reintegrate into their countries of origin and the socioeconomic implications this may entail for their countries. For this reason, we will pay special attention to the matter and will explore and encourage the adoption of new and comprehensive cooperative measures to ensure that they are treated appropriately, such as the signing of prisoner transfer treaties and memoranda of understanding on deportation procedures, to facilitate the reintegration of repatriated persons, with special emphasis on their well-being and on respect for their dignity and human rights.

We reiterate that illicit trafficking in persons is an affront to human dignity and reaffirm our commitment to increase cooperation in order to combat and punish this abominable practice. We commend the adoption of new laws in several countries against illicit trafficking in persons and urge other countries to implement similar measures. Our governments will continue multilateral cooperation in the Regional Conference on Migration and in other fora in order to exchange information and coordinate actions on migration matters in our countries. We will seek to establish mechanisms to share information and mutually collaborate to stop the organized smuggling of persons.

Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Human Rights

We applaud the achievement in the region of peace with harmony, mutual cooperation, and full respect for human rights. The end of internal conflicts in Central America has opened the way to reconciliation and the establishment of just, equitable societies that provide better opportunities for our peoples.

At this time of challenge and renewal, we reaffirm our commitment to continue the process of profound transformation, meeting the needs of our pluralistic democracies, based on strict respect for human rights, the effectiveness of the rule of law, mutual respect, the strengthening of local governments, and a more equitable and participatory civil society. We will continue doing our utmost to achieve economic well-being and the comprehensive development of our countries, and to preserve social peace, progress, and stability. We will also continue observing and promoting the rights of workers, including the elimination of any exploitative forms of child labor, in accordance with our respective Constitutions and with the Conventions of the International Labor Organization, as respectively ratified by our governments. In addition, working together within the Summit of the Americas process and the Organization of American States, we will endeavor to strengthen democracy and to increase prosperity throughout the Hemisphere.

We will work together to restore and create greater opportunities for the population affected by the hurricanes and to meet their needs with alacrity in order to prevent regional security from being threatened by the establishment of criminal networks. We will continue enhancing cooperation among our countries in the campaign against drug trafficking and organized crime.

We reaffirm our determination to bolster mutual legal assistance and information sharing arrangements that will deny safe haven to criminals. We support the modernization of extradition treaties and their vigorous application, within the legal framework of each country, to prevent impunity and to ensure that criminals are severely punished, in accordance with the severity of the crime committed. We will continue to modernize our laws against drug trafficking and money laundering and jointly seek opportunities to assist one another, through education, training, and technical support to prevent drug abuse. For these purposes, we are intensifying our efforts to execute the plan of action developed from the San Jose Summit.

Sustainable Development

The economic reconstruction of Central America and the Dominican Republic must address basic priorities such as reducing poverty, ensuring human development, and satisfying basic human needs with a sustainable management of natural resources. The region's sustainable development depends on overcoming obstacles such as imbalances in patterns of production, consumption, and human settlement; accelerated population growth; and high levels of poverty.

We have before us an unprecedented opportunity to rebuild the region and create jobs through domestic and foreign investment. We also have the opportunity of investing wisely, using sustainably our natural resources to ensure the well-being of present and future generations.

We recognize that global climate change has the potential to cause more frequent and severe natural disasters and thus recognize

the need for all Parties to meet their responsibilities under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Industrialized countries should reduce their emissions and developing countries should participate meaningfully in global efforts to address climate change.

We underscore the continuing leadership of Central America in advancing implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the evolution of the Clean Development Mechanism for implementation of climate-friendly projects, including clean energy development and the enhancement of carbon sinks. Building on the commitment of the San Jose Declaration, we recognize the importance of the actions that are being developed in Central America with the participation of our private sectors, especially those that will permit the concession of credits and other initiatives that will mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Recognizing the impact of climatic disturbances in the region, we agree that key components in the mitigation of disasters and in sustainable development include improved management of watersheds, reforestation, preservation of coastal wetlands, and efforts to prevent soil erosion through improved farming practices. It is, therefore, important to strengthen mechanisms of cooperation in the areas of natural disaster prevention and mitigation through education, training, institutional strengthening, and the transfer of technology.

We, the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, the United States of America, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, and the Prime Minister of Belize, express our sincere gratitude for the hospitality shown to us by the people and Government of Guatemala during our sojourn in this historic city.

NOTE: The joint statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Selection of the Director of the National Institutes of Health Vaccine Research Center

March 11, 1999

I am very pleased to join Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, National Institutes of Health Director Harold Varmus, and my AIDS policy office director, Sandra Thurman, in welcoming Dr. Gary Nabel as the first Director of the new Vaccine Research Center at the NIH. Dr. Nabel's long and distinguished career as a research scientist will be an incredible asset in our efforts to find preventative vaccines.

The first order of business for Dr. Nabel will be the effort to develop a vaccine for HIV. This is a top priority of our AIDS research efforts. Here in the United States, over 40,000 people are newly infected with HIV every year. Across the world, the rate is nearly 6 million people per year. These are lives in jeopardy. Though we have made remarkable progress in treating HIV and AIDS, there is still no cure. So our best hope of bringing an end to the AIDS pandemic is to find a safe and effective vaccine.

I have issued a challenge to the scientific community to find an AIDS vaccine within the decade. We are making important strides towards that critical goal and the leadership of Dr. Nabel will help us progress even more. Dr. Varmus and his team of expert researchers at the NIH, working in collaboration with scientists from across the globe, have produced remarkable results in reducing AIDS mortality here and in many other developed nations. Their improved understanding of how HIV works will be invaluable in the effort to find a vaccine to prevent infection in the first place.

The human tragedy of AIDS throughout the world must move all of us to action. The search for a vaccine for HIV must continue to be a global priority because millions of precious lives hang in the balance.